Writing a Winning Nomination

By following the steps below, you should be able to successfully create winning justifications for NASA Honor Awards, External Awards, and other nominations.

1. <u>Examine the criteria</u> (this is your clue as to what types of items/ elements will need to be inside the body of the write-up.

2. <u>Create a visual writing model</u> (see figure 1)
   - Draw a circle on a sheet of paper.
   - Write the award title you are nominating for in the middle of the circle
   - Write the accomplishments/ projects of the individual, you based this award on, around the circle (like sun rays) [Focus on award criteria points]
   - EXAMPLE: criteria reads "outstanding accomplishment" - list the outstanding successes the nominee had?
   - Research/list the individual's specific contribution(s) to the accomplishments/ project/team…., place a box around these
   - Research and list the scope, impact, peer perception, and results of each sun ray. (Place an oval around these)

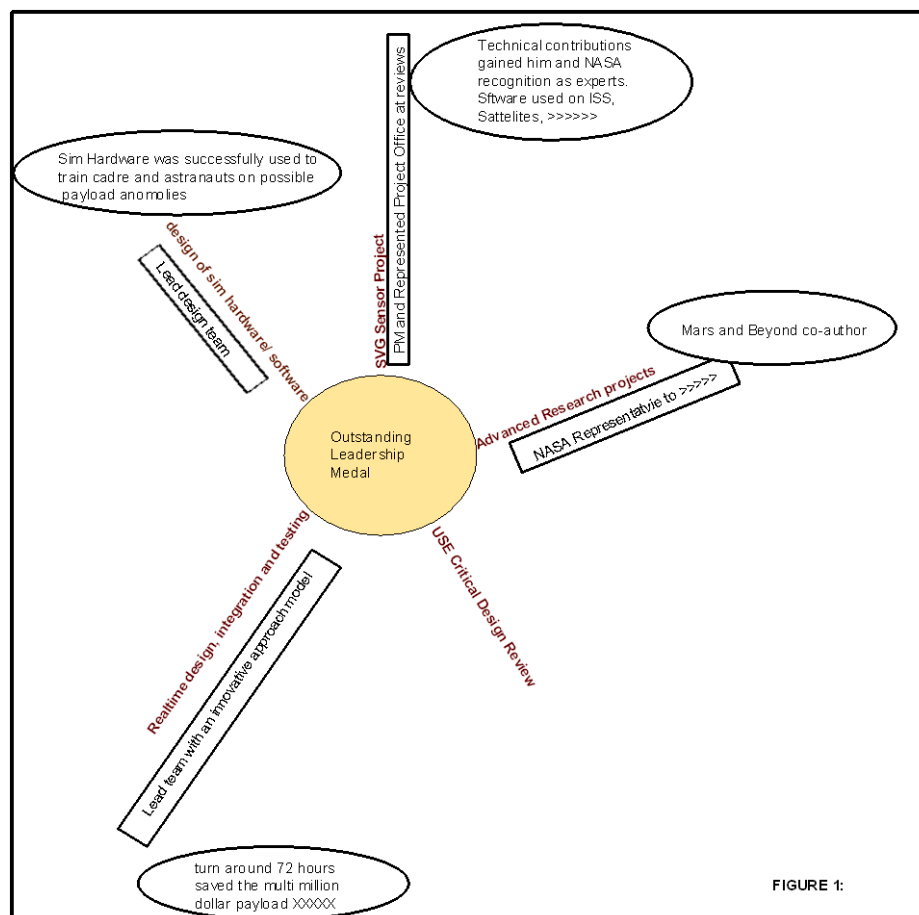   Each of these sunray groups are your writing points

Technical contributions gained him and NASA recognition as experts. Sftware used on ISS, Sattelites, >>>>>>

Sim Hardware was successfully used to train cadre and astranauts on possible payload anomolies

PM and Represented Project Office at reviews

SVG Sensor Project

design of sim hardware/ software

Lead design team

Mars and Beyond co-author

Advanced Research projects

NASA Representatlvie to >>>>>

Outstanding Leadership Medal

Realtime design, integration and testing

USE Critical Design Review

Lead team with an innovative approach model

turn around 72 hours saved the multi million dollar payload XXXXX

FIGURE 1:

3. <u>Formulate a skeletal outline.</u>
- Use an orderly system of reasoning for that award----Will your write-up follow a sequence of achievements that led to achieving a NASA mission. Will it be an exposé on several contributions? Will it be a list of projects/services provided over the many years? Where will you insert each criteria element?
- Each sun-ray group from the model is a talking point.

4. <u>Write a draft</u>
- **Identify** the keywords you will use from the criteria

Example:
NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal (EAM) - Is awarded to any individual in the Federal service for a <u>significant</u>, specific accomplishment or <u>substantial improvement</u> in operations, efficiency, service, financial savings, science, or technology which contributes to the NASA mission. The criteria are as follows:
- ❉ Work-related <u>achievements</u> yielding high-quality results and/or substantial improvement that support NASA's mission or organizational accomplishment.
- ❉ <u>Innovative approaches</u> used in the conception, <u>design,</u> or <u>execution</u> of the individual's work.
- ❉ Impact and importance of the individual's achievement to the NASA Mission Directorate's, Center's, or organizational component's goals and image.

Write-up
XXXXX demonstrates **exceptional** scientific **achievement,** technical **achievement** and notable ingenuity in developing and implementing the MARS design. XXXX demonstrated **innovative approaches** by applying scientific methods to the ………a nomaly testing. These innovative approaches lead to finding that the root **design** contained a vector flaw. Also XXX led the team to review and audit the_____, the_____, and the _____. As the chief engineer XXXXX was responsible for the **execution** of the _____. XXXX   **significant** contributions led to **substantial improvements** in the operations of YYYY.

- **Write your introduction.** Introduce the person, as it relates to the criteria, in the first sentences.

- **Define the accomplishments.** leadership/engineering achievements (broadly) in the next few sentences.

- **Write** the body of your justification.
  (here you expand on the details and specific elements you identified in your model)

  - ❉ Create every sentence so that it can stand alone.
  - ❉ Follow the logical sequence of reasoning you selected. (If you made your outline this will be automatic) You should be able to pull out any sentence, within the nomination, and it is completely understandable without any preceding information.
  - ❉ Do not start a sentence with a conjunction (But, And, Because)
  - ❉ Avoid run-on sentences.

- **Review/rewrite** the nomination and include a short summary, conclusion and comments on how the above justifications show that NASA goals were met.

TIP: Use Active Voice

Active Voice: The topic/ beginning of the sentences are about the person, criteria element, accomplishment, or the action you are focusing on in the justification. The focus item precedes the action/ verb.

Example: Outstanding Leadership Medal is about the leadership qualities of a **person.**
    <u>Passive</u>---While leading the YYY team Mr. XXX showed advanced leadership qualities. [Note the action of leading came before the important person]
    <u>Active</u>--- Mr. YYY showed advanced leadership qualities by leading the YYY team to
    a…

[Note the person (who was a leader) came before the action]

Example: Exceptional Achievement Medal is about the successes and accomplishments of a person--
    <u>Passive</u>--- In execution of the technical authority NASA gave XXXX , he/she presented the YYY issues before the launch committee.
    <u>Active</u>---The pre-launch investigations of YYY, YYY, and YYY were completed by XXXX as execution of his/her technical authority given by NASA.

[Note the investigations were the important achievements and came before the action in order to show-case the achievements]

Words/ phrases to avoid	**Reason**
After	Passive term
Coordinated with	Not specific (tell what and how he/she coordinated and who coordinated with)
He/she **has also** co-authored	Passive voice (Use--He/she co-authored……)
The goal of the XXX system was to….	Goals are not relevant to current impact. (How they met the goal is the relevant topic)
Leadership / leader	Use sparingly in summary (not the main topic unless it is the Outstanding Leadership Medal)
Not only does this…..	Passive voice. (Use this---The XXXX contributes to the YYYY, zzzz, and YYYY)
Responsive to request	Does not show anything exceptional.(could apply to any good worker)
Support, supported	Implies they were there, but does not show an active contribution
Then	Passive term
Worked with XXX for nine months…….	Not specific (tell what and how he/she worked on; what results/ impacts)
During the ---------….	Passive term

Errors to avoid	**Reason**
Short justification for an Honor Award	Four sentences will not supply enough information to justify any type of Award.
Do not give a history lesson as to how and why something is needed.	Focus on present accomplishments and the criteria elements. Use limited space wisely.
Cut out the dead wood	Don't use three or four words when one will do. (in advance of; use the word before)
Writing in passive voice	Does not get the important facts across to reader
Not backing up/supporting general statements.	XXX contributions are far reaching. (What contributions, what results? Why are they far reaching?)

EXAMPLE

Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal
Criteria:
NASA Exceptional Engineering Achievement Medal (EEAM) - Is awarded to both Government and non-Government individuals for unusually significant engineering contributions toward achieving NASA's mission. This award may be given for individual efforts or **application of engineering principles/methods that have resulted in contributions of fundamental importance in this field or have significantly enhanced the understanding of this field**. The criteria are as follows:

- Accomplishments are <u>far above</u> others in quality, scope, and impact.
- Accomplishments are <u>explicit,</u> <u>demonstrate results</u>, and are <u>perceived as outstanding</u> or significant by <u>peers</u> and <u>impacted target groups</u>. (More credit will be given for recent contribution(s) except in unusual circumstances where a contribution was overlooked at the time it occurred.)

Elements to include:

(your sun rays)	Specific accomplishments reinforce why/how they were far above
(your boxes)	Individual efforts
(your results oval)	Scope and impact
(your results oval)	Peer perception
(your results oval)	Results

Contributions at the preliminary and Critical Design Reviews of the Hubble telescope, GLAST, and the _____ would have been compromised except for the technical expertise of XXXX in finding the temperature variance issues and faults in the optical models. XXX engineering achievements have saved millions of dollars; ensured safety elements were in place and promoted NASA values on an international scale. XXXX was well received as the NASA representative by his peers at the _conference. Here he presented his paper for_____which not only impacted the way NASA identifies safety issues but is now being adopted by the Canadian and European Space Agency.